Setting up of Feb-City

1355. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to set up a Feb-City in the Country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering Hyderabad as a possible location for the proposed Fab-City;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed on 16.2.2006 between M/s SemIndia Inc. and the Government of Andhra Pradesh for establishing a FAB city in Hyderabad.

(e) Does not arise.

Overseas acquisition by MTNL

1356. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL propose to acquire a stake in Chinese telecom companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the MTNL is also looking for such a venture in African and other countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) MTNL is exploring the possibilities of investment in Chinese telecom market. Various telecom technologies/companies are planned to be considered for this purpose so that a decision for acquiring stake can be taken.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) MTNL is exploring the possibilities of investment/joint venture in Nigeria and Sri Lanka in Wireless telecom segment.

India-Singapore marine cable

1357. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL/MTNL are set to invest Rs. 1800 crores in marine cable between India and Singaproe;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it would be a profitable venture;

(d) whether certain Tele-ventures have already been providing this service on this route; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) A proposal to lay submarine Optical Fibre Cable from Eastern Coast of India to Singapore together by MTNL and BSNL is at conceptual stage.

(c) The current preliminary indications are that the project is profitable.

(d) and (e) M/s Bharti Infotel Limited and M/s Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited are providing this service through four cable system *viz.* South East Asia - Middle East - Western Europe - 3 (SEA-ME-WE-3), South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe-4 (SEA-ME-WE-4), i2i and Tata India Singapore Cable System (TIISC).

MTNL's focus on value added services for revenue growth

1358. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL has shifted its focus to value added services in order to double its revenue from these services;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the shfit has been necessitated by fierce competition among others by call rates dropping to even Rs. 1 per call; and